



Tom Barrett  
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE  
Commissioner of Health

**Health Department Administration**

---

Frank P. Zeidler Municipal Building, 841 North Broadway, 3rd Floor, Milwaukee, WI 53202-3653    phone (414) 286-3521    fax (414) 286-5990  
web site: [www.milwaukee.gov/health](http://www.milwaukee.gov/health)

For Immediate Release  
November 30, 2007

Media Contact: Raquel Filmanowicz  
414-286-3175 (Office)  
414-397-1614 (Cell)

## **World AIDS Day---Dec. 1**

### ***City of Milwaukee Health Department Joins Grandmothers Beyond Borders and Community Partners to Build AIDS Awareness***

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) in partnership with local non-profit Grandmothers Beyond Borders held a press conference today to recognize December 1, 2007 as World AIDS Day. World AIDS Day serves to focus global attention on the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Observance of this day provides an opportunity for governments, national AIDS programs, faith organizations, community organizations and individuals to publicly emphasize the importance of the fight against HIV/AIDS.

"AIDS continues to be a disease that disproportionately impacts residents of our city," said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. "It is appropriate that we partner with an organization whose mission is education to raise awareness in our community about HIV infection and AIDS."

Grandmothers Beyond Borders works with Ugandan Grandmothers struggling to raise their grandchildren because their own children have died from AIDS. Its mission is to support these grandmothers and their grandchildren by building relationships with them and their communities, assisting these women to send their grandchildren to school, reduce their rate of poverty and improve their standard of living.

"In order to make an impact on the global epidemic of AIDS, it's critically important that strong partnerships within the community be established to affect change around the world," said Amy Peterson, Grandmothers Beyond Borders Executive Director.

Americans should be reminded that HIV/AIDS does not discriminate. With an estimated 38.6 million people worldwide living with HIV at the end of 2005, and more than 25 million people having died of AIDS since 1981, December 1st serves to remind everyone that action makes a difference in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Wisconsin has more than 9,000 individuals who have tested positive for the HIV virus since the start of the epidemic with more than 50% of the reported cases in Milwaukee. The disparity is magnified in Southeastern Wisconsin, where 48% of the new cases were identified in African-Americans.

There is still no vaccine and still no cure for HIV/ AIDS. To defeat AIDS, we need to reduce the number of people who become infected. Prevention is still the only weapon we have to fight AIDS. We believe it will take a comprehensive approach to prevent the further spread of AIDS.

Today more than ever it is crucial that people know their HIV status. People who know they are HIV positive reduce risky behavior, which reduces transmission. The sooner that patients are diagnosed, the sooner they can receive treatment, which in turn reduces hospitalizations, improves quality of life, and longevity.

The City of Milwaukee Health Department offers confidential HIV/STD testing. Testing is available on a walk-in basis or by appointment at its Keenan Central Health Center at 3200 North 36<sup>th</sup> Street. To make an appointment for HIV Testing, call 286-3631. Services offered by the program include screening for sexually transmitted infections, HIV counseling and testing, medical case management for women living with HIV, presentations to community groups, and participation in health fairs. For more information, visit [www.milwaukee.gov/health](http://www.milwaukee.gov/health)

For more information about Grandmothers Beyond Borders and ways you can help their mission to support Ugandan women, please call 414-750-1005 or visit [www.grandmothersbeyond.com](http://www.grandmothersbeyond.com)

World AIDS Day 2007 was coordinated through a coalition of the following community partners: Be the Change, Pamela Allen, Wisconsin AIDS Fund, Family Treatment Fund and Diverse and Resilient.

###